

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5468

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Energy, Environment & Telecommunications, February 9, 2017

Title: An act relating to including nuclear energy in the principles that guide development and implementation of the state's energy strategy.

Brief Description: Including nuclear energy in the principles that guide development and implementation of the state's energy strategy.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Baumgartner, Sheldon, Hobbs, King, Walsh, Rivers, Takko, Miloscia, Bailey, Ericksen, Honeyford, Angel, Becker, Braun, Padden, Wilson and Schoesler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 2/09/17, 2/09/17 [DP, DNP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Includes nuclear energy as a clean energy source in the guiding principles of the state energy strategy.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Ericksen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Brown, Hobbs, Honeyford and Short.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Carlyle, Ranking Minority Member; Wellman.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: State Energy Strategy. Required since 1991, the state energy strategy is used to inform legislation, regulations, taxation, and other public policies. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) is charged with periodically reviewing the state energy strategy with the guidance of an advisory committee representing different regions and interests around the state. Any recommended revisions to the energy strategy are subject to a public hearing and

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a written report must be produced by Commerce and conveyed to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees.

Comprehensive energy strategies were produced in 1993, 2001, and 2012. Commerce recently released the 2017 Biennial Energy Report and State Energy Strategy Update.

Guiding Principles for the State Energy Strategy. The guiding principles are set forth in statute, and include reducing dependence on fossil fuel energy sources through improved efficiency and development of cleaner energy sources, such as bioenergy, low-carbon energy sources, and natural gas, and leveraging the indigenous resources of the state for the production of clean energy.

Nuclear energy is not mentioned in the guiding principles of the state energy strategy.

Summary of Bill: Adds Nuclear Energy to the State Energy Strategy. Nuclear energy is included as a clean energy source in the guiding principles of the state energy strategy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Allowing nuclear energy in the state energy plan would put more people back to work. We want electricity 24-7. The Columbia Generating Station provides a clean reliable energy future, that reduces carbon. Nuclear has to be part of the strategy.

CON: Nuclear energy can be part of state energy planning with or without the bill. This bill undermines the law as it exists today. Nuclear energy is too expensive to further the goal of affordability. Nuclear is not clean energy and nuclear waste remains active for thousands of years. There is risk of a nuclear meltdown. Nuclear is heavily dependent on fossil fuels for construction, mining, disposal, and decommissioning. It is appalling to justify nuclear power plants with economic arguments. Almost every nuclear power plant has had massive cost overruns. Washington has had a sorry history with nuclear power under the Washington Public Power Supply System due to technical and financial slips ups.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sharon Brown, Prime Sponsor; Brent Ridge, Energy Northwest.

CON: Charles Johnson, Director, Task Force on Nuclear Power, Washington and Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility; Elyette Weinstein, League of Women Voters; Michael Brunson, citizen.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: CON: Cathryn Chudy, Oregon Conservancy Foundation.